

Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 SOFIA 00665 261803Z

53

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SOFIA 0665

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: OEXC, PFOR, SCUL, BU

SUBJECT: US-BULGARIAN CULTURAL EXCHANGES

1. MY CALL APRIL 25 ON DIMITROV-GOSHKIN, CHAIRMAN OF COMMITTEE FOR FRIENDSHIP AND CULTURAL RELATIONS WITH FOREIGN COUNTRIES, BROUGHT OUT A NEW BULGARIAN RECEPTIVITY TO AMERICAN CULTURAL ACTIVITIES, ALTHOUGH IT ALSO SHOWED THAT MAJOR DIFFICULTIES REMAIN THAT WILL HAVE TO BE OVERCOME. GOSHKIN'S ORGANIZATION HAS BEEN BURYING GROUND FOR MOST OF OUR CULTURAL INITIATIVES, INCLUDING SOME DIRECTED TO OTHER BULGARIAN BODIES WHICH INVARIABLY REFERRED THEM TO HIS ORGANIZATION.

2. GOSHKIN TOOK IT AS GIVEN THAT THERE WILL BE CULTURAL EXCHANGES AND NOTED THAT "FOR FIRST TIME" DISCUSSIONS ON THIS SUBJECT WITH AN AMERICAN AMBASSADOR COULD BE HELD UNDER REALLY PROMISING CIRCUMSTANCES. HE SAID HE HAD HEARD THAT I AM PARTICULARLY INTERESTED IN CULTURAL MATTERS AND THOUGHT I COULD LOOK FORWARD TO SUCCESS IN ADVANCING THESE HERE. I STRESSED TO HIM THAT WHAT WE ARE LOOKING FOR IS "NORMALIZATION", NOT SPECIAL FAVORS LET ALONE A SPECIAL POSITION, AND POINTED TO FACT THAT OUR CULTURAL RELATIONS WITH BULGARIA HAVE

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 SOFIA 00665 261803Z

LAGGED BEHIND THOSE WITH ALL OTHER EASTERN EUROPEAN

COUNTRIES. IT IS A HIGHLY ANOMALOUS SITUATION THAT IN PRESENT ATMOSPHERE OF DETENTE AND INCREASED CONTACTS AND COOPERATION IN ECONOMIC FIELD, CONTACTS IN CULTURAL FIELD SHOULD BE SO SPARSE. GOSHKIN ACKNOWLEDGED THAT PRESENT SITUATION IS UNSATISFACTORY AND SAID POSSIBILITIES FOR IMPROVEMENT EXIST. HE DID NOT MENTION CULTURAL AGREEMENT.

3. HE THEN REFERRED TO PROBLEM OF RECIPROCITY. THE US, HE SAID, "AUTOMATICALLY OCCUPIES A SPECIAL POSITION WHEREVER IT GOES BECAUSE IT IS A BIG POWER", BUT BULGARIA NEEDS US ASSISTANCE TO MOUNT CULTURAL PROGRAMS IN THE UNITED STATES SINCE IT IS A SMALL COUNTRY WHICH HAS DIFFICULTY ARRANGING SUCH MATTERS DIRECTLY WITH PRIVATE US ORGANIZERS. THUS IN EFFECT BULGARIA NEEDS "SPECIAL TREATMENT" FROM US. I SAID THIS WAS DISAPPOINTING AND EXPLAINED THAT OUR CONGRESS DOESN'T EVEN APPROPRIATE MONEY FOR USG TO TELL ITS STORY TO THE AMERICAN PEOPLE (UNLIKE MANY FOREIGN COUNTRIES, WE HAVE NO MINISTRY OF INFORMATION), SO IT WAS DIFFICULT TO SEE IT APPROPRIATING MONEY TO HELP A FOREIGN GOVERNMENT TO TELL ITS STORY TO US.

4. INDICATING, I BELIEVE, THAT HE IS UNDER SOME PRESSURE TO BE FORTHCOMING WITH RESPECT TO US CULTURAL PROGRAMS, GOSHKIN THEREUPON ASSURED ME THAT HE WAS CERTAIN A WAY COULD BE FOUND AROUND THIS DIFFICULTY, AND SAID HE WAS ANXIOUS NOT TO BE MISUNDERSTOOD IN WHAT HE HAD SAID. AS FAR AS US IS CONCERNED, HE THOUGHT FUNDS MIGHT BE AVAILABLE FROM PRIVATE SOURCES SUCH AS FORD FOUNDATION WHICH IN PAST HAS OFFERED HELP TO BULGARIAN SCHOLARS TO STUDY IN THE US, AND REFERRED FAVORABLY TO THE IREX PROGRAM. HE ACKNOWLEDGED DIFFERENCES IN AMERICAN AND BULGARIAN SYSTEMS MADE IT DIFFICULT FOR USG TO PARTICIPATE ACTIVELY IN GOVERNMENT-TO-GOVERNMENT EXCHANGE PROGRAMS AND DESCRIBED BRITISH ORGANIZATIONS (BRITISH COUNCIL AND GREAT BRITAIN/EAST EUROPEAN CENTRE) WHICH MIGHT SERVE AS MODELS FOR US.

5. GOSHKIN SAID HE HAD COME TO THE SUBJECT OF RECIPRO-
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 SOFIA 00665 261803Z

CITY AND FINANCING ONLY "IN THE NATURAL COURSE OF THE CONVERSATION" AND DID NOT WISH TO STRESS IT OUT OF PROPORTION. THE IMPORTANT THING TO EXPANSION OF CULTURAL RELATIONS BETWEEN US IS THE GOODWILL AND SERIOUS INTENT WHICH CERTAINLY EXISTS AT PRESENT TIME, ETC. I SAID WE ARE PRAGMATISTS AND PREFER TO FIND ARRANGEMENTS THAT WILL WORK RATHER THAN DISCUSS PHILOSOPHICAL PRINCIPLES. GOSHKIN ASSURED ME OF WILLINGNESS TO

FIND PRACTICAL SOLUTION -- BUT REVERTED TO NEED FOR RECIPROCITY.

6. COMMENT: OUR PRESS AND CULTURAL OFFICER SAYS THIS IS MOST POSITIVE LANGUAGE HE HAS HEARD FROM DIMITROV-GOSHKIN DURING HIS TOUR HERE. MENTION OF FORD FOUNDATION, WHOSE MANAGEMENT EXCHANGE PROGRAM PROPOSAL TWO YEARS AGO BULGARS HAVE NOT PICKED UP, MAY INDICATE BULGARIAN INTEREST IN REVIVING PROGRAM IN GENERALLY IMPROVED ATMOSPHERE. IN THE PAST BULGARIANS HAVE USED ABSENCE OF CULTURAL EXCHANGE AGREEMENT AS EXCUSE FOR REFUSING OUR CULTURAL PROGRAM PROPOSALS. THEY PROBABLY ASSUME WE WILL COME FORWARD SOON WITH DRAFT OF SUCH AGREEMENT IN CONNECTION WITH THEIR PROPOSALS FOR SCIENTIFIC/ TECHNICAL AGREEMENT. IN INTERIM WE INTEND NOT TO WAIT FOR DEVELOPMENTS WITH RESPECT TO AGREEMENT BUT TO CONTINUE TO MAKE CONCRETE PROPOSALS FOR CULTURAL PROGRAMS.

7. WILL APPRECIATE DEPARTMENT SENDING US A SUMMARY OF HOW RECIPROCITY ELEMENT HAS BEEN HANDLED WITH OTHER EE COUNTRIES.HERZ

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